



Parent Handbook 2020-2021

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**Highlands Recreation District
Early Education Center
Calendar 2020-21**

**TBA August Highlands Rec Family Fun Day
August 17th Parent Welcome Coffee 8:00-10:00
September 7th Labor Day EEC Closed
September 18th Professional Work day EEC Closed
September 24th Parent Information Night 6:00-7:00
October 12th School Photos
October 7th Staff Meeting Early Closure 4:00
TBA October Halloween Family Fun Night 6:30
October 30th Classroom Halloween Celebrations
November 4th Staff Meeting Early Closure 4:00
November 11th Veterans Day-EEC Closed
November 26-27 EEC Closed
TBA Highlands Rec Holiday Party 6:00
December 2nd Staff Meeting Early Closure 4:00
December 11th EEC Holiday Party
December 24th EEC Early Closure 12:30
December 31st EEC Early Closure 12:30
January 6th Staff Meeting Early Closure 4:00
January 18th Martin Luther King Day EEC Closed
January 22nd Re-enrollment for Returning Families
February TBA Parent Teacher Conferences
February 3rd Staff Meeting Early Closure 4:00
February 12th Classroom Valentine's Day Celebrations
February 18th Open Enrollment Begins
February 14th Presidents Day EEC Closed
TBA EGGSTRAVAGANZA and Underwater Hunt 9:30
March 12th Professional Work Day EEC Closed
April 7th Staff Meeting Early Closure 4:00
May 4th Teacher Appreciation Day
May 5th Staff Meeting Early Closure 4:00
May 31st Memorial Day EEC Closed
June 2nd Staff Meeting Early Closure 4:00
June 18th Graduation 4:00**

Philosophy

The Early Education Center is a community-based school committed to creating a positive, safe, and nurturing environment in order to stimulate a child's curiosity, creativity and a joy for learning. We believe that children learn best through play. Each child's own tactile experience promotes creativity, independence and imagination as they construct their own knowledge through hands-on experiences. Our emergent curriculum incorporates music and movement, dramatic play, language, literacy, S.T.E.A.M, art, and sensory activities. Our developmentally appropriate and cozy environment supports a child's creative expression and enhances social-emotional, cognitive and physical development. Our school philosophy has been carefully crafted to support each child with the opportunity to learn at their individual level. The Early Education Center philosophy demonstrates the current best practices in early childhood education.

History

The Highlands neighborhood was built in the late 1950's. It was immediately clear to the residents of that era that a neighborhood recreation center would enhance the quality of life for this vibrant neighborhood. In 1957, the Highlands Recreation District (the Rec) was established, including a 5-member elected Board of Directors. In 1958, the residents overwhelmingly voted to purchase 3.45 acres of land and construct the facility and swimming pool we enjoy today. Since its inception, the Rec has improved its offerings to meet the diverse and dynamic needs of the community. In 2012 The Early Education Center was built replacing the previous part time preschool with a full day program serving children from infant to 5 years of age. Through collaboration, dedication, and responsible management 'the Rec' continues to be an integral part of the wonderful Highlands Community.

Staff

Qualified Educators are essential to the quality of any school. Educational background and experience with children are important considerations in the selection of our teachers. Because we believe that positive teacher and child interactions contribute to all facets of a child's growth and development, our teachers are warm, nurturing and energetic, and are committed lifelong learners. Professional Development during staff meetings and school closure is just one way we support the quality of our programs with current best practices in early childhood education. Leadership in the classroom is shared among teaching teams.

Staff for the 2020-21 School Year

Kay Erikson-Director

Kristen Lein-Assistant Director

Christina Casino -Monkey Teacher

Paula Hernandez-Araujo Monkey Teacher

Amy Ramian- Monkey Teacher

Ariana Carter- Chameleon Teacher

Amy Macasaet- Chameleon Teacher

Jasmine Manalac- Chameleon Teacher

Kim Adams- Tiger Teacher

Sasha Fuller- Tiger Teacher

Colleen Hahn-Tiger Teacher

Carrie Schweitman-Floater

Admissions

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. Addition to the waitlist is done upon receipt of a complete application and a \$25 fee. Re-Enrollment for returning families begins in January for the following school year. Open enrollment for new families begins in February. Siblings of current students, Highlands District Residents and siblings of students in our school age program After School Program are given priority during our open enrollment period.

Registration

An annual, non-refundable registration fee is due at the time of registering for the EEC and every year thereafter. For residents this amount is \$300 and for non-residents the amount is \$600. Your registration is not complete and your child's spot is not confirmed until the registration fee has been received and a signed Admission Agreement.

Enrollment

In addition to completing registration it is required that you create an ePACT account and complete all forms prior to your child's first day. You are responsible for keeping your information in the ePACT system up to date, including immunization records.

Annual Tuition

2020-2021 EEC Monthly Rates (Effective July 1 st)		
Program	Resident	Non-Resident
Monkeys: Rate 5 Day	\$2381	\$2596
Chameleons & Tigers: Rate 5 Day	\$2175	\$2379

Payment

Tuition can be paid by cash, credit card, check or bank withdraw. Payment must be made by the end of the 5th business day of the month. A \$25 late fee will be assessed following a late payment. Checks returned for insufficient funds will be subject to a \$20 charge. After two late payments, families will be required to sign up for automatic payments. Automatic payments can be made via ACH (from your bank account) or via ARB (from your credit card). If enrolled in our ACH/ARB program, cancellation or changes must be received by the 15th of the month prior to the ACH/ARB withdrawal. Forms for either payment option are available through the director. The deductions/charges will begin 30 days after the form has been submitted and any tuition due before then must be paid by cash, check or credit card. No adjustments will be made to tuition for shorter months, holidays or midmonth withdraw. The *Highlands Recreation District Early Education Center reserves the right to terminate this admission agreement upon failure of timely tuition payment.*

Withdrawals

A 60-day written notice must be given for you to withdraw from the center. If less than 60-day notice is given, payment for additional months of tuition (up to two months) will be required until the space is filled. Tuition will not be prorated for a midmonth withdrawal date.

Start Date

Children new to the Early Education Center will be informed of their start date 60 days prior to their first day. Consideration will be taken for preferences for a start date, but cannot be guaranteed. Failure to enroll your child and pay the first month's tuition for the assigned start date will result in a loss of placement.

Refund Policy

The Admission Agreement is binding. No refunds will be given for registration fees or tuition.

Late Pickup Fee

Please pick up your child(ren) by 6:00pm, per the clock in the classroom. You will be charged \$5.00 per minute after 6:00pm.

This fee must be paid in cash to the Educator/Director at time of pickup or within 5 calendar days. If not paid within 5 days, twice the late fee amount will be due. This amount cannot be added to your monthly tuition fee, and you are responsible to phone in a credit card number if you choose to pay with credit card.

Frequent lateness which is defined by three late fees in one month may result in termination from the EEC program.

Discounts

There is a \$10/ sibling discount, per month, for any sibling living in the same household and enrolled in the Early Education Center.

Visitation

Parents and legal guardians are free and welcome to visit and spend time in their child's classroom at any time.

Programming

Programs:

We offer year-round, full day childcare from 7:30am-6:00pm for children ages 3 months to 5 years in three classrooms. Our Monkey classroom is for children ages 3 months through age 2 with 8 children. Our Chameleons classroom is for children ages 2 years through 3.5 years of age and is limited to 16 children. Finally, our Tiger classroom is for children ages 3.5 through 5.5 years of age and is limited to 18 children. Each classroom is staffed with 3 Early Childhood Educators.

Arrival and Departure:

You are welcome to bring or drop off your child at any time during center hours. A binder containing a sign-in/out sheet is located near the front the door of the classroom **Please sign your child in and out each day with your full legal signature.** Failure to do so may result in a \$500 fine from Community Care licensing which parents or legal guardians who fail to sign in or sign out will be responsible for. If someone other than you or those listed on your approved pick up list, will be picking up your child please make sure to provide a written note with the person's information and inform them they must bring picture I.D. You may add people to your approved pick up list at any time during the year through our EPACT system. Please be considerate of our Educators time and allow enough time when picking up your child at the end of the day to gather his/her belongings before the center closes.

Absences:

We encourage families to let us know of absences including illness or planned vacations.

Enrichment Classes:

The recreation department offers a variety of enrichment classes. Families are welcome to sign up for classes but must choose those that end by 4:15 if your children will be returning to the EEC. You are welcome to sign up for classes that end after 4:15, however, you are responsible for picking up your child from the enrichment class. Enrichment class registration is done separately, through the registration office. When signing up for classes, please email Kristen to ensure that your child is added to our escort list. In addition, a permission slip must be on file.

Special Events:

During the year we celebrate a number of special events with children and families. Some of these events include our Halloween Parade, EEC Holiday Party and end of year graduation celebration.

Curriculum

The Early Education Center offers a developmentally appropriate program with age appropriate activities. Our curriculum is play-based. Because children learn through experience, we encourage exploration of the environment through hands on learning: an essential component in stimulating curiosity in children. The daily schedule allows for a balance between indoor/outdoor activities and structured and unstructured time. Our child centered environment supports independence to choose from a variety of materials and activities. Language, literacy, math, science, and music are an integrated into our daily curriculum.

We offer home visits for new families in order to support a child's transition to school by supporting strong relationships with their Teachers. Teachers will contact families prior to their child's first day, regarding scheduling a home visit. Optional Parent Teacher conferences are held in the February and are a wonderful opportunity to share information with your child's teacher. Fun days are scheduled throughout the year and one of the ways we build classroom community. Examples of Fun days include: pajama day and crazy hair day. Another way we build classroom community is through share days in the Chameleon and Tiger classrooms. Your child will be assigned a day for sharing at the beginning of the year. Share days are not held during our summer transition period.

A Typical Day in the Tiger and Chameleon Classrooms

- **Arrival Indoor Play**
- **Outdoor Play**
- **Circle**
- **Lunch**
- **Nap**
- **Indoor Play**
- **Outdoor Play**

Learning Environment:

The following is a list of possible activities during inside and outside play. The classroom is organized into various learning centers. Children may select activities from these centers.

Art: Structured open-ended art projects are offered every day. In addition, children are free to choose from the art centers which have a variety of materials such as paper, crayons, markers, tape scissors, glue sticks and recycled materials. Painting is offered every day. The ECC emphasizes the process of the activity and not the finished product.

Dramatic Play: Pretend play supports children's learning and development across all domains. Our dramatic play center inspires children to take on new roles, such as a Doctor, Entrepreneur or Parent. We rotate our dramatic play props monthly based on children's emerging interests.

Language and Literacy: The reading nook is a comfortable area that provides a space for children to independently choose books to explore. Books are rotated in coordination with the current children's interests and seasons. Exposure to literature is crucial to children's interest in reading. The writing center is a place that supports children's emerging writing.

Science: Through measuring, weighing, predicting and examining, children are natural scientists. With an abundance of tools, like magnifying glasses, magnets, and scales, children have the opportunity to explore their world around them through hands on activities. This may include planting and maintaining a garden, exploring the lifecycle of an egg, exploring chemical changes or the physical properties of air.

Sensory Table: Our sensory table will house a variety of materials including water, birdseed, bubbles, cloud dough, beans, rice, and small dramatic play provocations. An example of these provocations could be the inclusion of small wood animals or natural materials like glass pebbles.

Math/Cognitive: Children become familiar with basic math concepts by learning to sort, classify, count and measure through a variety of means. In the Math center children have the chance to explore a variety of materials such as puzzles, manipulatives, and loose parts. Through a coordinated program and creative teaching utilizing powerful interactions, math is included in nearly all aspects of the curriculum, from sand play to cooking projects to counting songs during our circle time.

Outdoor play area: Our outdoor environment supports gross motor movement, as well as connecting with the natural world. With the abundance of open space surrounding our center, children have many opportunities to explore beyond our preschool yards.

Communication

The Directors and Teachers do their very best to keep you well informed. We believe in open communication with families. We encourage you to inform us of anything going on in your child's life that may affect him or her while at the EEC. Parents best support the EEC climate of trust and respect by communicating concerns openly and constructively to the teacher or administrator closest to the problem. While parents may not agree with every decision by the center, in most cases, parent and the center will find enough common ground to find a mutually respectful relationship. In the extreme case, however, an impasse may be so severe that the parent cannot remain a constructive member of the community. In such cases, both the parent and the center should consider whether another center would be better match for their family.

Parents can contact us by phone (650) 341-4251 or email to the classroom or specific person. Please see the directory below:

Staff Emails:

Amy Macasaet	Chameleons	amym@highlandsrec.ca.gov
Amy Ramian	Monkeys	amyr@highlandsrec.ca.gov
Ariana Carter	Chameleons	arianap@highlandsrec.ca.gov
Colleen Hahn	Tigers	colleenh@highlandsrec.ca.gov
Jasmine Manalac	Chameleons	jasminem@highlandsrec.ca.gov
Kay Erikson	Director	kaye@highlandsrec.ca.gov
Kim Adams	Tigers	kima@highlandsrec.ca.gov
Kristen Lein	Asst. Director	kristenl@highlandsrec.ca.gov
Paula Hernandez	Monkeys	paulah@highlandsrec.ca.gov
Sasha Fuller	Tigers	sashaf@highlandsrec.ca.gov

Parent Communication:

Please check the following places for information

Classroom Rosters: are shared with families each fall and when changes are made

Classroom Whiteboard: This is where you will find daily curriculum plans and important reminders.

Student Cubbies This is where you will find hard copies of student communication.

Weekly Email containing curriculum, event and class specific information will be emailed at the end of the week.

Monthly Newsletter which is available in hard copy in the classrooms as well as shared electronically

SeeSaw: The EEC uses photo sharing thru SeeSaw which is private and restricted to class members.

Teachers will upload photos on a regular basis.

Addressing Concerns:

Any concerns about your child's experience within our learning environment should be addressed with your child's teacher first. If issues or concerns remain unresolved after seeking classroom input, please contact the Director. Our door is always open!

Health and Safety

Illness and Exclusion

Please do not bring your child to school when they are sick. If your child develops an illness while at school, you will be notified to come and pick them up immediately. Teachers will check temperatures with two identical thermometers to validate an illness. Temporary exclusion from school is necessary when a child has a fever above 100.6, has vomited due to illness, or has diarrhea.

Children must remain at home until they are symptom free without medication for 24 hours. While we understand that children cannot remain at home for every cold, we reserve the right to exclude children, if they appear to be too unwell to participate in school fully. Children with heavy discharge from the eyes or nose, may be excluded for 24 hours. Children who show symptoms of Hand Foot and Mouth disease will be also be sent home. Symptoms include blisters on the hand, foot or mouth, a sore throat, and a fever. If a child is diagnosed with Hand foot and Mouth disease, per the CDC recommendations, we require that families keep their children at home until the rash subsides, as the disease can remain contagious during this period. Children with Lice must be “nit free” before returning to school. Please notify the Director if your child has a communicable disease, as we are required to post exposure notices.

It is our experience that following immunization shots many children feel to unwell to participate in the activities of the center. We recommend families keep children home on the day they receive immunizations.

Medication

All prescription and non-prescription medications, including Epi-pens and Aquaphor shall be administered only with written approval and instructions from the child’s parent/guardian and in accordance with the label instructions from the child's physician. We must have the prescription bottle and the label must be unaltered. Sunscreen and diaper cream are considered medications and require a permission slip.

Washing Hands

Your child will be encouraged to wash hands with soap and water upon arrival.

Allergies

Please inform us of any allergies or special dietary needs of your child. This information will be posted in a prominent place in the kitchen. Children with allergies that require medication must have a medical plan on files. We provide alternative snacks for children with allergies. We support children with severe allergies, and may restrict certain foods like peanuts if necessary, to keep our children safe from cross-contamination. Restricted foods will be posted on the classroom door and shared with families via email.

Emergencies

Should a disaster occur, we have emergency supplies for each child, as well as emergency and evacuation procedures. If the Highlands Recreation Center becomes uninhabitable by fire or other disasters, the children will be escorted to a designated safe space, such as Highlands Elementary School located on Newport Street. Directors will contact parents following an emergency.

School Closure

The EEC Director in coordination with the General Manager may decide to close the school for the following conditions: prolonged period without heat or electricity, no water, poor air quality, and

dangerous driving or working conditions for our staff or students. School closures will be communicated to parents by phone, email or in person.

Classroom Policies

Baby Sitting

The District recognizes that staff members are occasionally offered the opportunity to provide babysitting services to families who are also either occasional or regular patrons of the Highlands Recreation District. This is a mutually beneficial arrangement between families and various individuals, currently employed by the HRD, hereinafter referred to as Babysitters, as it provides families with piece of mind by having known and trusted adults caring for their children, and Babysitters gain additional income.

While the HRD does not encourage such arrangements, it is in everyone's best interest that the nature of the arrangement and the consequent transfer of liability be clear to all:

1. If the Babysitter is caring for a child immediately following an HRD childcare program, any District liability for childcare services ends at the time the child is signed out of the program, after which time the HRD staff member becomes the sole responsible party, i.e., the Babysitter.
2. If the Babysitter is caring for a child immediately following any other HRD event or program, any District or contractor liability ends at the time the event or program ends or at the time the child leaves the event or program, whichever is earlier, after which time the Babysitter becomes the sole responsible party.
3. The District's general liability coverage is in place, as it is for any guests on District property, until the child and Babysitter leave District premises.
4. The District does not retain any liability for any time during which the Babysitter transports the child or otherwise provides care for the child. In the event of car travel, the Babysitter's personal insurance may be the sole coverage, and the District makes no representations as to the existence of or level of such coverage.
5. While the District properly vets all staff members who interact with children at our facility, any vetting for any care and/or transport outside of District programs is the sole responsibility of the family.
6. Any financial arrangement is solely between the Babysitter and the family.
7. HRD staff members are not under any obligation to provide care outside of District programs.

What to bring to school?

Each day your child should bring a backpack with a change of clothes and a water bottle. Clothes may also be left in the child's cubby. Please label all clothing items brought to school. We ask you to refrain from sending toys from home with your child to school, except on their designated share days. Comfort items like lovies and soft toys are fine, as some children need extra support separating from their primary caregiver. There are a number of reasons why we have this toy policy: our teachers are intentional with the curriculum materials that are in the classroom; secondly, we cannot be responsible for toys from home getting lost or broken; and finally toys from home create challenging situations around sharing and self-regulation. We ask that you leave toys either at home or in the car.

On designated share days please place share item in the share bin (Chameleons) or cubbies (Tigers) upon arrival.

Holidays & Birthdays:

We recognize each child's birthday in several ways. Please coordinate with your child's teacher if you would like to bring in a special celebration or tradition. We ask that if your child's class includes a child with allergies any celebratory food be brought from a store. On his/her birthday a child is invited to create a special crown which he or she can wear throughout the day. Holidays and family traditions are important to a child's culture. We encourage and welcome you to bring or share traditions, such as special food, songs or activities, that are important to your family. Doing so fosters an inclusive and respectful community and celebrates each family's uniqueness.

Clothing:

In keeping with our philosophy of hands on learning and exploration, children will get messy! The paint used in our classrooms is advertised as "non staining", but may be difficult to remove. We strongly urge you to send your child in play clothes and sensible shoes for outdoor play. Closed toe shoes that children can take on and off themselves are requested. During the winter months, we will go outside in inclement weather, and therefore ask that you send your child in appropriate clothing. Appropriate clothing includes shoes that can get wet and jackets that are warm and waterproof. Families are welcome to leave rainboots, water shoes and rain suits in the classroom shoe basket.

Toilet Training:

Parents of children in diapers or training pants are asked to bring an adequate supply. We supply Kirkland Baby Wipes. If you would prefer a different wipe you must supply your own. When a child shows interest in using a toilet, we will work with families to support toilet training.

Monkeys Lunch, Snack & Bedding:

Children in the Monkey room are required to provide all foods and liquids. Teachers will meet individually with parents, prior to the first day, to develop a needs and services plan, which will be updated quarterly.

In the Monkey classroom, each child has an individual nap plan. We will supply sheets which will be laundered daily. Children are welcome to bring additional bedding to be stored in their cubbies, however, we are unable to launder personal items. Please consider the size of your child's cubby when choosing personal bedding, as we request that it not be oversized.

Chameleon & Tigers Lunch, Snack & Bedding:

Children bring lunch to school each day and the class eats together. Please pack lunches that are ready to be eaten as we are not able to heat up food for children in the Chameleon and Tiger rooms. If you would prefer a warm lunch, a thermos works great! We are also unable to refrigerate items for children in the Chameleon and Tiger rooms. Children are not permitted to share food as we need to be careful of allergies or special dietary requirements of individual children.

Each morning and afternoon the children in the Tiger and Chameleons classrooms are invited to the snack table. Snack is optional and children are never forced to participate. Snack will consist of two servings from one of the four food groups, generally a fruit or vegetable and a protein or carbohydrate. We do not provide alternative snacks to children who choose not to eat what is served,

except for children with allergies. We will encourage all children to try new things through modeling and providing a variety of foods. Snack is posted daily on the classroom whiteboard.

All children in the Chameleon and Tiger room are required to have a 2-hour rest period. Licensing requires that the children remain on their mats. After a 30-minute rest period, children who are not asleep will be allowed to choose quiet activities to do on their mat. When staffing allows children, who do not nap may also be given the opportunity to play outside. We will supply sheets which are laundered weekly. Children are welcome to bring additional bedding to be stored in their cubbies, however, we are unable to launder personal items. Please consider the size of your child's cubby when choosing personal bedding, as we request that it not be oversized. *Licensing prohibits us from keeping children awake or waking them from sleep.*

Behavior

Positive Guidance

We are committed to a "Positive Guidance" policy. Positive guidance encourages self-respect, self-discipline, cooperation and problem-solving skills. Children's behavior expectations in the classroom are set according to what is developmentally appropriate for the age of the child. The behaviors that adults may find challenging are often appropriate for a child's age and developmental stage. It takes time for children to learn the vocabulary and language skills that allow them to express themselves in socially acceptable ways. In order to support children to learn empathy and compassion, we do not force children to share or say "sorry". By setting up an intentional and positive environment and curriculum, teachers support children's behavior. Through the use of "natural consequences" children are empowered to make their decisions and to be responsible for their own behavior. Teachers help children when conflicts arise in a number of ways. Some of these include redirection, validation of feelings, helping children to take a "calm down break", modeling appropriate behavior, establishing close relationships with children and families, and helping children to problem solve.

Parents

In order to support the child's environment and the communication with families it is necessary to set boundaries and expectations for adults that will foster a positive climate. The following behaviors are prohibited at the EEC and may result in termination. Any behavior that the staff consider to be rude, threatening, demeaning, or disruptive or which interferes with the staff's ability to provide care. The EEC is a no-cell phone zone. We ask that you refrain from using your phone when dropping off and picking up your child. If you need to take a call, you are welcome to step out of the classroom, and of course you are welcome to use your phone to take photos of your child or their work.

Referrals

An important element of our ongoing teacher-parent communication is to keep you informed of your child's behavior. If a child exhibits continued problematic behavior, the teachers and Director will meet to discuss techniques to promote more appropriate behavior. If the problem persists beyond the best interest of the child and class, we may require the parents to seek outside professional help. Failure to do so may result in a child being asked to leave the school.

Special Needs

Our school is committed to supporting an "inclusive classroom" and therefore welcomes children with special needs. Some children may need an aid to assist them in the classroom, however we are unable

to provide aids for children. It is recommended that the aid meet with the staff prior to working in the classroom to familiarize themselves with our routines and philosophy. Aids must be selected and paid for by the family. If a child has an Individual Educational Plan (IEP), we require the sharing of information so that teachers can individualize the curriculum to support all children. It is suggested that teachers, families and aides meet regularly.